

Message Text

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SUBJ: ANGOLAN REFUGEES: RISING DISCONTENT

SUMMARY: RISING DISCONTENT AMONG THE ANGOLAN REFUGEES, FACED WITH GOVERNMENT INACTION AND AMPLIFIED BY NASCENT REFUGEE ORGANIZATIONS, IS A FACTOR IN PORTUGUESE POLITICS OF GROWING IMPORTANCE. OVERWHELMINGLY CONSERVATIVE AND LARGELY BEYOND THE REACH OF LEFTIST CRITICISM DUE TO THE NATURE OF THEIR PLIGHT, THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE TAKING AIM AT THE LEFT, THE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED PRESS, AND THE GONCALVES REGIME. THEIR PARTICIPATION IN SEVERAL OF THE RECENT INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE HAS BEEN NOTED BY MAJOR POLITICAL ACTORS. END SUMMARY.

1. HIGH-LEVEL CONCERN: INDICATIVE OF THE HIGH LEVEL AT WHICH THE REFUGEE QUESTION IS BEING TREATED, THE DIRECTORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL ISSUED A DECREE ON AUG 15 ENJOINING SEVERAL

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TIONARY COUNCIL ISSUED A DECREE ON AUG 15 ENJOINING SEVERAL

MINISTRIES TO PROVIDE THEIR MOST "DECIDED AND DIRECT" ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT AGENCY CHARGED WITH REFUGEE AFFAIRS, THE INSTITUTE FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF RETURNING CITIZENS (INSTITUTO DE APOIO AO RETORNO DE NACIONAIS--IARN). THE DECREE SPECIFICALLY CALLED ON THE MINISTRIES OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, PUBLIC WORKS, LABOR, AND AGRICULTURE TO AID THE REFUGEES WITH WELFARE, EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, AND WITH INTEGRATION IN THE AGRARIAN REFORM. THIS DECREE ADDED TO A GROWING LIST OF GOVERNMENTAL MEASURES YET TO HAVE ANY VISIBLE IMPACT ON THE PLIGHT OF THE REFUGEES. ON THE SAME DAY, IARN REITERATED AN EARLIER PETITION TO ALL PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS AND PRIVATE CITIZENS TO ASSIST IN HOUSING REFUGEES. INTERESTED PARTIES WOULD PROVIDE SHELTER WITHOUT REIMBURSEMENT. SOME LEFTIST PARTIES HAVE CALLED FOR THE INSPECTION OF ALL HOUSING SO AS TO DISCOVER ANY UNOCCUPIED BEDROOMS; REFUGEES WOULD BE INSTALLED IN THESE REGARDLESS OF THE OWNERS' OPINION.

2. REFUGEES FORM COMMISSION: MEANWHILE THE LISBON REFUGEES HAVE SET UP THEIR OWN AD HOC COMMISSION TO DEAL WITH THEIR PROBLEMS. THEY CHARGE THAT IARN HAS ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING IN THE SEVERAL MONTHS OF ITS OPERATION. IARN IN TURN CLAIMS THAT THE AD HOC COMMISSION'S CLOSE PARTISAN TIES WITH THE CENTER SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAVE IMPEDED ANY PROGRESS OF ITS OWN.

3. REFUGEE DEMANDS: OVER A THOUSAND REFUGEES MET IN LISBON ON AUG 18 TO DRAW UP A LIST OF DEMANDS TO BE PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNMENT. THESE DEMANDS INCLUDED: FASTER EVACUATION OF THE REMAINING PORTUGUESE IN ANGOLA; URGENT EMPLOYMENT; MOBILIZATION OF ALL AVAILABLE HOUSING; AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS OR THE CREATION OF SCHOOL SHIFTS FOR THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN. A MANIFESTO READ AT THE MEETING BY REFUGEE LEADERS STATED IN PART: "WE SAW HOW WE WERE RECEIVED AND TREATED UPON OUR ARRIVAL IN OUR COUNTRY; WE HAVE FELT THE DISCRIMINATION WITH WHICH WE HAVE BEEN TREATED; OUR SONS ARE TRAUMATIZED. WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE REQUIRED HELP, NOT FROM THE GOVERNMENT, NOT FROM THE PARTIES, NOT FROM THE MEDIA." BUT, THE STATEMENT WENT ON TO ADD: "WE CONSIDER THE GOVERNMENT THE FIRST AND SOLE CULPRIT RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR PROBLEMS." DURING THIS RALLY JOURNALISTS BELONGING INFORMATION ORGANS POPULARLY IDENTIFIED AS COMMUNIST-LINING WERE INSULTED, THREATENED, AND OCCASIONALLY ASSAULTED. A TELEVISION CREW FROM THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED RTP WAS PREVENTED FROM ENTERING THE HALL.

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THROUGHOUT THE HIGHLY EMOTIONAL RALLY SLOGANS SUCH AS "DOWN WITH ROSA COUTINHO," AND "WE WERE CHEATED AND HUMILIATED" WERE SHOUTED BY THE CROWD. ANOTHER RALLY IS PLANNED FOR THE EVENING OF THE 20TH.

4. REFUGEE RALLY: ANOTHER GROUP OF REFUGEES MET, ALSO ON AUG 18, IN VILA REAL TO PROTEST THEIR TREATMENT. THE TENOR WAS SIMILAR THOUGH LESS HEATED THAN THE LISBON MEETING. THOUGH VIOLENCE WAS EXPECTED OF THE SEVERAL HUNDRED DEMONSTRATORS AND

TROOPS WERE ON HAND, THE RALLY OCCURRED WITHOUT INCIDENT.

5. REFUGEE DISTRIBUTION: REFUGEE ANGER DUE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S SORRY RELIEF EFFORTS WERE MORE THAN JUSTIFIED, AS THE FACTS SHOWED. ROUGHLY 60,000 REFUGEES HAVE BEEN REPATRIATED UP TO NOW. OF THESE, A FEW HUNDRED HAVE BEEN RELOCATED IN THE AZORES AND MADEIRA, SEVERAL THOUSANDS REMAINED IN THE LISBON AREA (ABOUT 2,000 AT THE INATEL REFUGEE CAMP IN CAPARICA), AND THE LARGE MAJORITY, 80 PERCENT IS A QUOTED FIGURE, HAS BEEN SHIFTED TO THE NORTHERN REGION OF PORTUGAL. THE GOP CLAIMED, PROBABLY ACCURATELY, THAT 90 PERCENT OF THE REFUGEES HAD FOUND HOUSING WITH RELATIVES OR ELSEWHERE, BUT THIS FIGURE COULD OBSCURE THE GRIM NATURE OF THE SITUATION. MOST OF THESE REFUGEES DESCENDED ON RELATIVES THAT WERE THEMSELVES LIVING IN INADEQUATE OR BARELY ADEQUATE HOUSING. STORIES OF ENTIRE FAMILIES LIVING IN A SINGLE ROOM, OR OF CHILDREN SLEEPING ON THE FLOORS, WERE COMMON. OF COURSE THE SITUATION WAS MORE DESPERATE FOR THOSE WITHOUT FAMILIES; MANY WERE REPORTED TO BE SLEEPING IN PARKS OR IN THE STREETS.

6. GOP NEGLECT: PATENT EVIDENCE OF GOVERNMENT NEGLECT LIES IN THE FACT THAT IARN HAS YET TO OPEN AN OFFICE IN OPORTO, WHERE IT IS MOST NEEDED IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. THERE ARE NO OFFICIAL RELIEF AGENCIES IN THE ENTIRE NORTHERN REGION OF PORTUGAL. DESPERATE REFUGEES SHOW UP DAILY AT THE MILITARY HEADQUARTERS IN OPORTO LOOKING FOR PROMISED RELIEF CHECKS; THEY ARE CONSISTENTLY PUT OFF. THE GOP PROMISED THE REFUGEES THAT THEY WOULD BE MONETARILY TAKEN CARE OF: ANGOLAN CIVIL SERVANTS WERE TO RECEIVE 50 PERCENT OF THEIR BASE PAY, AND UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS WERE TO RECEIVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF RELIEF. NO MONEY AT ALL HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO THE REFUGEES.

7. RED CROSS CURBED: GOP NEGLECT OF THE REFUGEES DOES NOT STOP LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HERE. THE RED CROSS, WHICH HAD BEEN DOING ITS UTMOST TO DEAL WITH THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN NORTHERN PORTUGAL BY PROVIDING FOOD, CLOTHING, AND OTHER SERVICES, HAS BEEN PROHIBITED BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO ENGAGE IN ANY FUND-RAISING DRIVES. THEIR TREASURY IS REPORTED TO BE DOWN TO THE LAST 100,000 ESCUDOS. THE RED CROSS IS BEING PUNISHED FOR WHAT WERE SUPPOSEDLY OVERLY CLOSE TIES WITH THE FORMER REGIME.

8. INTERSINDICAL DISCRIMINATION: DESPITE THE GOVERNMENT INJUNCTION TO FACILITATE THE EMPLOYMENT OF REFUGEES, A NUMBER OF CASES HAVE BEEN NOTED WHERE INTERSINDICAL HAS DISCRIMINATED IN ITS HIRING PRACTICES AGAINST REFUGEES. COMMUNISTS AND OTHER LEFTISTS REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN FAVORED OVER REFUGEES IN A NUMBER OF CASES OF COMPETITION OVER SCARCE JOBS.

9. COMMENT: RISING DISCONTENT AMONG THE ANGOLAN REFUGEES, FACED WITH GOVERNMENT INACTION AND AMPLIFIED BY NASCENT REFUGEE ORGANIZATIONS, IS A FACTOR IN PORTUGUESE POLITICS OF GROWING SIGNIFICANCE. OVERWHELMINGLY CONSERVATIVE AND LARGELY BEYOND THE REACH OF LEFTIST CRITICISM DUE TO THE NATURE OF THEIR PLIGHT, THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE DRAWING A BEAD ON THE LEFT, THE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED PRESS, AND THE GONCALVES REGIME. THEIR PARTICIPATION IN SEVERAL OF THE RECENT VIOLENT INCIDENTS IN THE NORTH, ALTHOUGH GIVEN LOW-KEY TREATMENT BY THE MEDIA, HAS BEEN NOTED BY ALL MAJOR POLITICAL SECTORS HERE.

10. THE INABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS CREATED BY THE REFUGEES ALREADY IN PORTUGAL IS PATENT. IT ALSO BECOMES PAINFULLY OBVIOUS THAT THE GOP, UNAIDED, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THE ESTIMATED 250,000 - 300,000 REFUGEES IT HAS PLEDGED TO RETURN TO THE METROPOLE WITHIN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS. ALL PARTIES RECOGNIZE THAT THIS INFLUX OF DISCONTENT WILL POSE A THREAT TO THE STABILITY OF THE CURRENT REGIME.
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